

# Adult Education

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## Mission

To promote lifelong learning opportunities for Indiana's adult population that help assure Indiana's continued economic growth and strength in the global marketplace.

## Summary of Activities

Adult education funds support many activities outside of traditional school settings for adults who are at least 16 years of age, not enrolled in school, and who lack a secondary credential or equivalent skills. The state is served by 43 comprehensive programs that provide a wide range of services and are supported by local, state, and federal funds. The comprehensive programs are administered by the **Department of Education (DOE)**, local school corporations, **Vincennes University**, and the **Department of Correction (DOC)**. A total of 80 school corporations receive state funding for their communities.

The Adult Basic Education program addresses the needs of adult learners, which range from literacy challenges to GED preparation. Outreach programs provide adult education/literacy instruction and related services to adults residing in under-served geographical areas, and to members of under-served target populations who are educationally disadvantaged.



The GED-on-TV program, which provides educational services via public television, has enrolled 14,731 adult learners since 1990, of which 5,691 earned a diploma.

The Even Start family literacy program helps break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy, improving the educational opportunities of low-income families by integrating early childhood education, adult literacy, adult basic education, and parenting education into a unified family literacy program. The ten Even Start programs are supported by federal, local, and state funds. Additionally, the funds support adult learners who wish to go back and earn high school credit that will result in them earning their high school diploma.

## External Factors

One significant external factor deals with the state unemployment rate. In general, as the unemployment rate decreases, the number of students enrolled in adult education classes decreases. Conversely, as the unemployment rate increases, a rise in adult education course enrollment is seen. Demand for adult education services is a function of both the availability of jobs and the changing requirements for employment.

Adult education program enrollment has remained stable for the past four years. In the 1999 - 2000 program year, 58 percent of the enrollees were unemployed. This population includes many of the state's former public assistance recipients. A low level of basic skills inhibits their ability to get or maintain a job and earn a livable wage.

Adult education in Indiana has been serving a high percentage of younger individuals. When program enrollments for the 1997-98 program year were compared nationally, Indiana had the second highest percentage of 16- to 18-year-old participants in the country. Fifty-nine percent of the 1999 - 2000 enrollees were 16 to 24 years of age.

As the non-English speaking population increases, enrollment in English literacy instruction also increases. The portion of all adult education enrollees receiving English literacy instruction in 1999 - 2000 was 17 percent, compared with 9 percent in the 1994-95 program year. Employers are increasingly requesting assistance in helping their non-English speaking workers learn English.

## Evaluation and Accomplishments

In 1999, 12,799 adults received their GED, many of whom participated in state-supported adult education programs. Nearly one-half (48 percent) of the 41,760 program participants in 1999 - 2000 improved their basic skills, a 3 percent increase in two years. Twenty-nine percent gained employment or received a job promotion by upgrading their skills. Additional participant achievements included leaving public assistance, attending post-secondary education programs such as higher education and skilled trades, and receiving U.S. citizenship. The total number of positive student outcomes increased by 27 percent in two years.

## Plans for the Biennium

Adult education programs will support eligible adults in their roles as workers, parents, and citizens. Programs will focus on meeting the demand for adult education services in their communities, particularly those related to the workforce, and increasing student outcomes to achieve the state's performance measures under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act.



A new Workplace Essential Skills (WES) program will provide pre-GED level communication, workplace reading, writing, and math skills, in addition to job readiness skills. Twenty-five videos, four workbooks, and an on-line component will be utilized together to enhance students' chances of getting and keeping a job as they move toward GED-level study. It is projected that an additional 300 to 500 learners will take advantage of this program.

